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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 001623

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EZ](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: CZECHS ON NOV 21 GAERC

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Classified By: Poloff Sarah C. Peck for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) Summary. The primary focus of the Nov 21 GAERC will be the EU budget. The Czechs support the Luxembourg Compromise, but pragmatically believe no compromise will be reached in the upcoming GAERC (or even this year). The Czechs generally support EU efforts in the Middle East, the Balkans, and in Belarus. The Czechs do not plan to discuss Cuba at the upcoming GAERC or in December. End summary.

[12](#). (SBU) Poloff met on Nov. 2 with Miroslav Kolatek, Deputy Director of the Czech MFA's CFSP Department, to discuss the Nov. 21 GAERC. As summarized below, the discussion touched on the EU budget (the primary focus of the upcoming GAERC), the Middle East, Belarus, Ukraine, the Balkans, and Cuba.

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EU Budget & Agricultural Subsidies  
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[13](#). (C) Kolatek predicted that the EU budget will be the primary focus of the Nov 21 GAERC. The Czechs hope a compromise can be reached, but are pessimistic. They support the proposal of the Luxembourg presidency (the "Luxembourg Compromise") along with 19 other countries, and have agreed to coordinate with the Visegrad Four to advocate for a compromise. However, the Czechs believe there will be no breakthrough until the five largest EU countries accept their responsibility to compromise. The Czechs do not have a separate position on EU agricultural subsidies and tariffs outside of the budget dispute, although they generally support a liberal trade policy.

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The Middle East  
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[14](#). (C) On Iraq, Kolatek said the Czechs welcome EU efforts to help stabilize Iraq, both in connection with the upcoming election, and with enhancing public security and rule of law overall. The Czechs do not currently have plans to increase their level of commitment in Iraq. However, when and if security conditions improve, the Czechs plan to move their capacity building training programs from other countries to Iraq itself. Additionally, according to Kolatek, the Czechs have not been asked to provide election monitors for the Iraqi election, but would seriously entertain such a request if made by the OSCE, the UN, or the EU. And on the subject of debt relief, Kolatek thought the Czechs would support an EU initiative to forgive a portion of Iraqi debt.

[15](#). (C) On the Rafah crossing, the Czechs agree with EU involvement in principle, but want further discussions with EU partners on security issues and the role the EU will play (e.g., will the EU provide customs agents or troops at the border, or only indirect support?)

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Belarus & Ukraine  
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[16](#). (C) Turning to Belarus, Kolatek said the EU has agreed to establish meaningful contacts with Belarus opposition leader, Aleksandr Milinkievich. The Czechs are involved in shaping the strategy of how and when the EU can reach out to Milinkievich, and how the EU can minimize the expected backlash from Lukashenko. Other countries involved in the discussion on Belarusan dissidents include Poland, Lithuania, Finland and Germany.

[17](#). (C) On Ukraine's economy, Kolatek said the EU is hopeful that Ukraine will qualify for market economy status soon.

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The Balkans  
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[18](#). (C) The Balkans are a primary focus for Czech foreign policy. The Czechs welcomed the formal decision to launch SAA negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and support ongoing efforts by the EU to promote stability in the region. Czech PM Jiri Paroubek has just returned from a visit to the region, where he announced that the Czechs will offer institution-building assistance (as yet to be defined) to

Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro.

19. (C) On Kosovo, Kolatek said PM Paroubek recently initiated internal discussions on the issue of Kosovo,s future. Kolatek said the Czechs agree that compromise on both sides will be essential, but difficult, and therefore resolution of Kosovo,s future will take time.

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Cuba  
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110. (C) Kolatek said the EU is considering a formal EU demarche on Havana following the Czech National Day incident. The details are being worked out at the working group level. The Czechs do not have any proposals on Cuba for the upcoming GAERC meeting or for the agenda of the December Council meeting.  
CABANISS